

their wounds, so that the remainder, amounting to 75,000 men or more, were sacrificed to diseases for the most part preventable.

During the American war 97,000 men died from wounds, while just double the number, 184,000, perished from diseases which modern knowledge declares to be mainly preventable. What a sea of blood and tears, what want of provision and due care for the health of such great numbers of men massed together, do such figures suggest!

During the Franco-German war the losses on the German side in killed and wounded exceeded, for the first time in military history, those sacrificed by disease; it was, in fact, more than double in amount, for while 17,572 received death at the hands of the enemy, and 10,710 succumbed from the effects of their injuries, the number of those who died from disease was only 12,253.

In all the older campaigns blood-poisoning caused the most fatal consequences to the wounded. In the American war the number who died from this cause was enormous. * * * At Sedan, among the French troops, pyæmia was the uniform cause of death after operation, in gun-shot fracture, and in many cases of simple flesh-wound."

"We now possess means of checking this horrible malady, and in the campaign in Egypt in 1882 our surgeons were furnished with the best antiseptic appliances, and the material in their hands was turned to such excellent account that not a single man died from pyæmia, septicæmia, erysipelas, or hospital gangrene—a result altogether unparalleled in the annals of war."

Valuable tables of cases are appended.

C. B. KEETLEY.

ON CONTAGION THROUGH THE USE OF ETHER INHALERS
SUGGESTIONS FOR ITS PREVENTION.

At the West London Medico-Chirurgical Society on May 6, Mr. Richard W. Lloyd, anæsthetist to the West London Hospital, made some very important observations on the administration of anæsthetics by breathing in and out of a rubber bag; for example, take that of "Clover's inhaler."

Who amongst us has such contempt for the infectious theory of the origin of certain diseases that he would cheerfully and readily inhale

out of a bag which has just been held for a couple of hours over the mouth of a sufferer from advanced phthisis, or diphtheria, or scarlatina.

It is true that these appliances can be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected after each time of use. But are they? They certainly are not. I have seen anaesthetics administered in many hospitals, and I cannot recollect a single instance in which the administrator gave more than a mere nominal cleansing to his apparatus. I have had to ask the anaesthetist to give chloroform instead of ether, because he was about to use a bag which he had only five minutes before taken off the mouth of a patient with tuberculous lungs. Such an occurrence would perhaps be less likely in America where, I believe, it is not the custom to use india rubber bags and complicated mouth-pieces for ether administration; but everywhere such are required for nitrous oxide.

It is possible also that the ether vapour itself may be a sufficient antiseptic; but has it always time to act?

Then, moreover, there is the sentimental aspect of the subject. It is surely more repulsive for a number of people in succession to breathe in and out of the same bag than to use the same pocket-handkerchief or wear the same shirt.

By far the most ingenious invention to obviate the difficulties under discussion, indeed the only one yet presented to the profession (as far as I know) has just been brought out by Mr. Richard Lloyd. He has the inhaling bags made so thin that the value of the india rubber and the cost of manufacture amount to a mere trifle. *It thus becomes practicable for each patient to have an entirely new bag.* These bags are made by a process of blowing out while warm, just in the same way as those spherical films of india rubber which children buy in the toy shops and of itinerant sellers.

The mouth-piece has to be cleansed with soap and carbolic acid. To it a brush can be used. Messrs. Maw, Son & Thompson, of Aldersgate street, London sell the bags by the dozen or by the gross.

I think there are few people who will not be ready to acknowledge that Mr. Richard Lloyd has hit upon an exceedingly happy idea.

C. B. KEETLEY.